Press Release

A large majority of Dutch expect positive effects from innovation and count on Europe

**A clear majority of people in the Netherlands expect innovation to have a positive effect on their lives in the next few years. This is true particularly in the areas of mobility, healthcare and the fight against climate change. At the same time, the Dutch acknowledge the international competition in advancing technology that comes from the United States and China. But they are also confident of their country’s innovative capability and, given the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, would like to see an increase in European cooperation.**

*Brussels, 12 October 2020* – Most Dutch citizens surveyed expect innovation and advances in technology such as digital transformation to have a primarily positive impact on their lives in the coming years. However, they are more pessimistic than Europeans as a whole. While they consider the innovative capacity of their own country and that of Europe to be comparatively good, they see strong international competition in key technologies. Many express concern with regard to jobs or the protection of personal data. These are the findings of a pan-European survey of more than 12,000 citizens in 28 European counties, including 1,000 adults in the Netherlands, conducted on behalf of Germany’s Bertelsmann Stiftung.

**Positive effects expected for mobility and healthcare, concerns about jobs and data protection**

According to the survey, 62 percent of Dutch citizens expect innovations to have a primarily positive impact on their lives. A total of nine percent believe innovation will, in fact, have very positive effects. Only 20 percent fear more adverse effects, of which only four percent expect particularly negative effects. Dutch citizens are therefore less optimistic than the average European with regard to their expectations for the future impact of innovation.

Healthcare and long-term care are the areas in which Dutch respondents most frequently expect to see innovations have a positive impact over the next 15 years (36%). Some 35 percent believe they’ll experience improvements in mobility and transport, 32 percent in the supply of energy, and 24 percent expect to see improvements in environmental protection and the fight against climate change. Only 11 percent of Dutch respondents do not expect to see any positive effects any of the noted areas. A total 36 percent fear negative effects primarily with regard to job creation, while 41 percent see risks regarding the protection of personal data.

Compared with the findings of a similar survey in 2019, this year’s survey shows a significant increase – attributable to the coronavirus crisis – in the desire for more innovation. For example, 54 percent of Dutch respondents expressed that they would like to see more support for innovation targeting improved healthcare (+13% compared with 2019). Some 41 percent expressed that they would like to see more support for innovation targeting jobs (+13%), 35 percent want to see more innovation focused on the fight against climate change (1%), and 23 percent want to see it help improve education (+9%).

**Awareness of international competition**

The Dutch are aware of the state of innovation in their country and of where Europe stands in terms of international competition in advancing technology. When it comes to assessing their country’s innovation capability, the Dutch rate themselves rather positively: A total of 71 percent think that the Netherlands performs fairly well or very well on international comparison in terms of technological progress. On the other hand, 17 percent see a rather poor level of performance, of which three percent see their country as featuring only limited innovative capacity. Dutch respondents give positive ratings primarily to their country’s policy framework and economic conditions: For example, 63 percent consider the national framework conditions to be good or very good, while only 15 percent see poor conditions. This self-assessment is one of the best in all EU countries. Europe as a continent is also seen by 69 percent of Dutch respondents as a strong performer when it comes to innovation. This assessment is also somewhat more positive than the European average (66%).

However, a direct comparison with international competitors in key areas of innovation also highlights Europe’s weaknesses. In the areas of AI, big data or blockchain technology, for example, 39 percent of Dutch respondents see the United States as outpacing European countries. A total of 52 percent also see the People's Republic of China as having an advantage over Europe.

**More European cooperation desired**

Given Europe’s relative lag, a majority of Dutch respondents (52%) favor increased cooperation between EU states on innovation. Some 18 percent consider the current level of cooperation sufficient, and another 18 percent would prefer less European and more Dutch national initiatives. The coronavirus crisis has resulted in a slight increase in the desire for more European cooperation.

Brigitte Mohn, a member of the Bertelsmann Stiftung board of directors, sees the findings as a clear appeal to policymakers and the business sector: “Particularly in the area of innovation and the promotion of cutting-edge technologies, we in Europe must cooperate with one another much more vigorously instead of seeking to go it alone on the national level. Enhancing our technological competitiveness while at the same time working to solve urgent societal problems requires ambitious innovation-policy goals and implementation mechanisms more efficient than those currently in place. Moreover, in the current crisis, we must not shy away from investment in innovation; rather, we need to invest more, in a countercyclical manner, in order to unlock future potential.”

Additional information:

The “European Opinion Survey on Popular Attitudes Toward Innovation” was carried out by Dalia Research on behalf of Germany’s Bertelsmann Stiftung (eupinions project) in August 2019. The survey was conducted in 28 EU member states, with a total of 12,263 participants. The survey sample reflects the EU’s current population distribution in terms of age (16–65 years), sex and region/country. In a follow-up survey conducted in June 2020, questions from the original survey were repeated in order to gauge the possible effects of the global coronavirus pandemic on Europeans’ opinions.

eupinions is an independent platform for European public opinion. They collect, analyse and comment on what the European public thinks about current political issues and megatrends. eupinions employs cutting-edge data collection techniques. Every quarter, they collect samples from each EU member state in 22 languages. The data meets the highest scientific standards and is representative with regard to age, gender, education and country/region. eupinions is a project of Bertelsmann Stiftung. The data is collected by Dalia Research.

Further information: <https://eupinions.eu/de/home>

The survey is part of the global research being conducted in association with the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Reinhard Mohn Prize 2020. The theme of the Reinhard Mohn Prize 2020 is “Fostering innovation. Unlocking potential.” It is looking for solutions that may enable Europe to generate technological change that benefits society. The Reinhard Mohn Prize 2020 is being awarded to Nechemia (“Chemi”) Peres, chairman of the Board of Directors of Israel’s Peres Center for Peace and Innovation. With this award, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is honoring the entrepreneur for his exceptional commitment to fostering innovation, which has benefited economic goals and the broader society in equal measure.

About the Reinhard Mohn Prize:

The Reinhard Mohn Prize is given in memory of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's founder, Reinhard Mohn († October 2009). Since 2009, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has awarded the €200,000 prize to internationally renowned individuals who have played a key role in developing forward-looking solutions to social and political challenges. The prize is given based on a global search for innovative concepts and exemplary solutions to challenges that will have a decisive impact on Germany’s future.

For more information, visit: [www.reinhard-mohn-preis.de](http://www.reinhard-mohn-preis.de)

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**About the Bertelsmann Stiftung: Inspiring people. Shaping the future.**

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to enabling social participation for everyone – politically, economically and culturally The issues we address are education, democracy, Europe, health, values and the economy. In doing so, we focus on people, since only they can change the world and make it better. We share knowledge, promote expertise and develop solutions. A nonprofit foundation, the Bertelsmann Stiftung was established in 1977 by Reinhard Mohn. For more information, please visit: www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de